

## HELLO AGAIN

**VOL. 26 NO. 6**

**NOV – DEC 1995**

**A PERSONAL NOTE:** Happy 75th anniversary to radio. Please have a happy holiday season. Give your friend an OTR related gift....We lost another collector. Dejay Shriner recently died. He was an expert on Our Miss Brooks and had cross referenced over 400 titles...I have misplaced the log for "Murder at Midnight" which Ray Stanich did. If anyone has a copy I would really appreciate it.

**ULTIMATE HISTORY:** Supplement #3 is now available. Cost is \$5 plus \$1.50 for P&H

**CONVENTION 1995:** 20th Anniversary Mugs are available. They were on sale at the convention for \$5. Because of the P & H cost, we are lowering the cost to \$4 plus \$4 for postage and handling, a total of \$8.00 for each mug...Our 36-page Convention Booklet is available for \$2.00 plus \$1.00 for P & H...Our Friends of OTR flashlight-key chains are \$1.00 plus \$1.00 P&H (Total of \$2).

**CONVENTION 1996:** Dates are October 17 – 19, 1996 at the Holiday Inn North, Newark, NJ...The winner of the second annual script writing contest is James Nixon of North Reading, Massachusetts. His Lone Ranger script will be performed on Thursday night, Oct 17. Second place went to Edgar Russell, III. We are having our planning meeting in January or February at the Holiday Inn North. The date is to be set but if you have ideas, please get them to me before January if possible. If you would like to attend the meeting, please let me know.

**PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED:** Many thanks to those magazines that publicized our convention.. **Remembering the Mills Brothers**, Sep...**The Times of Kate Smith**, Summer.. **Nostalgia Digest**, Oct – Nov; articles on 75 years of radio; Trombone-playing band leaders.. **Old Time Radio Digest**, Jul – Aug; articles on Cincinnati's 9th annual convention; juvenile radio programs by Terry Salomonson...Sep – Oct; article about Willard Waterman; **The Illustrated Press**, Sep; articles on Nick Carter; Summertime radio; Tokyo Rose...Oct; articles on Command Performance; Ma Perkins; Jack Armstrong; Voice of Experience...**On The Air**, Sep - Oct; articles on the depression years, WW II and growing up with radio...**Old-time Radio Gazette**, Sep – Oct; articles on Suspense; Mike Wallace; collecting Shadow items; Science fiction on radio in the 50's; Dr. Christian...**Daily Sentinel**, Nov – Dec; articles on Richard Kollmar, Canadian Radio, Christmas on the Radio, 45 years of "Unshackled".. **Jack Benny Times**, May - August; interview with Phil Harris...**SPERDVAC**, October; article on Maplewood Farm in New Hampshire...Nov – Dec; articles on OTR in Cyperspace; Twanging through Time with Conrad Binyon.. **Tradition**, Sep – Oct; publication of National Traditional Country Music Assoc...**Radio Recall**, Oct; article on Alois Havrilla...**Jot 'em Down Journal** (Lum and Abner Society), Oct...**Thrilling Days of Yesteryear**, Nov – Dec; article about animal imitators.. **The Cantor Connection**, Sep – Oct...**On The Air**, Nov – Dec; article on a personal experience with Benny Goodman by Owens Pomeroy.

**BOOKS:** Greenwood Publishing Group has published many bio-bibliographies in the performing arts. James Robert Parish is the series editor. About 70 have been published. For a list or to order call 1-800-225-5800...**Rainy Day Books** (Frank Bequaert), Box 775, Fitzwilliam, NH 03447 (603) 585-3448 has just issued Catalog B7 which lists many radio broadcasting books and paper products for sale...**Stickball, Streetcars and Saturday Matinees** by Cliff Worth takes readers on a nostalgic trip to the city neighborhoods of our past, where they'll enjoy a soda at the corner drugstore fountain..thrill to the Lone Ranger on the radio..visit an old-time penny arcade



and watch as burly workers fill the basement bin on coal delivery day.. Cost of the 100 – page book is \$17.99 plus \$2.50 P&H. Write to Reminisce Books, Ste 3542, Box 990, Greendale, WI 53129 (1-800-558-1013.

**CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS:** This is little off the track, but if you are looking for that old, rare piece of sheet music, write **C. A. (Tom) Maturo**, Box 27126, West Haven, CT 06516 (203) 782-9206. Most prices are between \$1.50 and \$3.50...If you are in the San Bruno area of California visit **Nothing's New**, a "new" vintage media store run by **Lourdes and Roger Hill**. Their grand opening was September 30. It is located at #23 Bayhill Shopping Center just south of I-280 and San Bruno Ave., They have just about everything in the vintage media field from OTR shows to lobby cards to books & magazines and stamps & FDC and video tapes. Phone is (415) 871-6063; FAX is (415) 871-6062...The next induction ceremonies for the **National Broadcasters Hall of Fame** is Sunday, Dec. 3, 1995 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel in Beverly Hills, CA. Inductees include Rosemary Clooney, Casey Kasem, Dick van Patten, Jonathan Winters, Jack Whitaker, Les Brown and Herb Jeffries. Cost is a minimum of \$250 a ticket. For information call 818-994-4661.

**THE INTERNET:** Many of my subscribers are on the Internet. Here are some of them with their e-mail address: Ronald Apgar (apgar@enter.net)...Bob Burnham (platecap@bbs.gatecom.com)...Randy Cox (cox@stolaf.edu)...Dale Dix (Baldix@aol.com).. Ed Drumm (snicker571@aol.com)..Matthew Mark Drew (561@aol.com)...Lou Genco (lgenco@crl.com) Lou's Web site with much OTR information is (<http://www.crl.com/~lgenco/otr.html>)...Danny Goodwin (DG125@aol.com)...Steve Hiss (SAH@gnv.ifas.ufl.edu).. Evan Katz (my stepson) (ekatz@indiana.edu)...Tony Kekalso (vk8tk@ozemail.com.au)...Laura Lee (JackBenny@delphi.com)...Charles Laughlin (claughli@ccs.carleton.ca)...Steve Lewis (CT) (LEWIS@CCSUA.CTSTATEU.EDU)...Tom Miller (otrmiller@ships2.com)...Lee Maschmeyer (lee-maschmeyer@ucc.wayne.edu)...Richard Odlin (bba@halcyon.com)...Ken Piletic (KENPILETIC@aol.com)...John Pellatt (jrp@sources.com)...John Rayburn (JRayb71827@aol.com)...Bruce Rosenberg (BR3D@aol.com)...Carolyn and Joel Senter (75050.411@compuserve.com)...Charlie Summers (lof@yrkpa.kias.com)...Bill Slankard (bill.slankard@ccs.org) or (CIS: 72722,3473)...Jim Widner (jwidner@otr.com) Jim has a web site: //http://www.ctr.com...Joe Webb (JWWmtf@aol.com)...Jordan Young (jyoung@mail.calypso.com)

**LOGS:** I have the most recent **Our Miss Brooks** listing put out by Dejay Shriner. It consists of about 412 alphabetical titles covering about 153 circulating radio shows. They are all cross referenced. Cost is \$3 for the 20-page listing...**Chris Lembesis** and **Randy Eidemiller** have prepared a complete log with much background information on "**Quite Please.**" Frank Thomas, Jr. reminisces about his participation. Cost for this log is \$10 plus \$3 for P&H. Each show which is in chronological order is describe.

**CATALOGS AND NEW SHOWS:** **Hello Again Radio** (Bob Burchett), Box 6176, Cincinnati, OH 45206 has a new supplement with cassettes numbered 2165 – 2356. Shows include Amos 'n' Andy, Fibber McGee and Molly, Have gun Will Travel and many others...**Nostalgia** (David Kiner), Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073. This supplement with Bing Crosby on the cover has Bing Crosby Shows, Anderson Family, Man Called X, others...**Great American Radio** (Gary Kramer), Box 504, Genesee, MI 48437. This supplement dated Oct. 7 has among many others, Crime Does Not Pay, The Fifth Horseman, Man Called X, Mary Noble, Backstage Wife...His supplement dated Nov. 10 has Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar; Jack Benny; Lux; Roy Rogers, others...**Dave Siegel**, 419 Granite Springs Rd., Yorktown Hts, NY 10598 has new Leonidas Witherall; Let's Go To the Opera; Live and Learn; Living; Feeling is Mutual; Festival of Brazilian Music; Fight AAF; Fred Allen; Fred Waring...**Vintage Broadcast** (Andy Blatt), 42 Bowling Green, Staten Island, NY 10314 has his Halloween Supplement with Si and Elmer, That's Rich, The Avenger, Let



George Do It, The Third Man and others...**Chuck Schaden**, 5425 W Addison St., Chicago, IL 60641 (1-800-538-6675) has his latest catalog out (Volume 3). Its 48 pages has hundreds of radio shows...**AVPRO**, Box 347, Howell, MI 48844 (Terry Salomonson) has many new shows including Favorite Story, Hop Harrigan, Clyde Beatty, Fred Allen, Sam Spade, Gang Busters, Lights Out (5/11/38 and 4/26/39; This is Your FBI, Chandu...**BRC Productions** (Bob Burnham), Box 2645, Livonia, MI 48151 has his 1995-96 edition with Box 13, more remastered Suspense, The Falcon, Casey Crime Photographer, Mr. Keen, Nightwatch and many others...**Radio Memories** (Ted Davenport), 1600 Wewoka St., North Little Rock, AR 72116 has many improved and new shows including Railroad Hour, Challenge of the Yukon (15 minute shows), Amos 'n' Andy, Hedda Hopper, Favorite Story...**Radio Showcase** (Steve Kelez), Box 4357, Santa Rosa, CA 95402; October supplement has many shows including Dangerous Assignment, Cloak and Dagger, Superman, Red Skelton...**Jim Stringham**, 220 Denver St., Lansing, MI 48910 tells of a new series called "The Hexahedron," produced in Canada. I am not sure if it will be aired or sold...**Ed Carr**, 216 Shaner St., Boyertown, PA 19512 has new Lum and Abner and Perry Mason

**NEW ADDRESSES:** **Harry Brodrick**, 624 First Ave. East, Newton, IA 50208...**Bill Slankard**, 1909 Birchwood Ln., Arlington Hts., IL 60004...**Gerald Eskin**, 26 Wolfe St. Unit 1, West Roxbury, MA 02132...**Frank Tomaselli**, 119 Woodsmill Blvd., Cocoa, FL 32926

**NEW FRIENDS AND RETURNEES:** **John Carbo**, 65 Alpha Ave., Stonington, CT 06378 is looking for the original version of the Mysterious Traveler "The Visiting Corpse" (1/9/44)...**Gordon R. Payton** (The Sci-fi Guy) has a very large collection of American, British, Canadian and South African science fiction shows on tape. For information write 119 East Cuthbert Blvd., Bldg O #3, Westmont, NJ 08108 (609) 854-7069...**David Green**, 1332 Connecticut, Lawrence, KS 66044...**Jerry Collins**, 56 Christen Ct. Lancaster, NY 14086...**A. Carroll**, Box 437, Fair Haven, NY 13064...**Dale Dix**, Gran. Farms Est. E316, 1343 W Bal., Wawa, PA 19063...**Leo Gawroniak**, Box 248, Glen Gardner, NJ 08826...**Harry Enberg**, %PLI, 810 7th Ave., New York, NY 10019.. **Keith Gamble**, 87 Beacon St., Melrose, MA 02176...**Paul Mellos**, 331 E 81 St., New York, NY 10028...**Phil Pelton**, 416-68 St., Brooklyn, NY 11220...**Art Pierce**, 339 Nassau St., Rome, NY 13440...**Joel Senter**, 4003 Clifton Ave., Cincinnati, OH 45220...**Tony Kekalos**, ESC/AV FOM, PSC 276 Box 102, APO AP 96548.. **Steven Pope**, 381 Deering Ave., Portland, ME 04103 is looking for any material pertaining to sports and radio for a book.. **Jack Sobel**, 49 Willow St. #2G, Brooklyn, NY 11201...**Anthony Di Florio**, 1124 South 7th St., Philadelphia, PA 19147...**Richard King**, 18 Middle St., Barrington, RI 02806 (not to be confused with Richard King in Colorado). Two fellows named Steven Lewis (NJ and CT) come to our conventions...**Nancy Smith**, 7797 Payne Landing Rd., Gloucester, VA 23061...**Mark Dereng**, 801 Pine Forest Ln., Prospect Hts, IL 60070 would like a copy of "In Chicago Tonight", 8/1/40 with Al Jolson, Martha Raye and Jack Whiting....**Ruben Thomas**, 830 Manida St. #1, Bronx, NY 10474...**John Gallagher**, Box 415, Flourtown, PA 19031...**Jim Morrison**, 19228 Charles St., Tarzana, CA 91356...**Martin Tytun**, 84-11 Lander St., Queens, NY 11435...**Jack Shugg**, Box 81 Jerome Ave. Station, Bronx, NY 10468 says that for a SASE he will supply a complete list of the videos he has available. Jack was in Conference Room 6 at our Convention...**Elizabeth Kearney**, 117 8th Ave. \$2, Brooklyn, NY 11215 is trying to find Jean Shepherd tapes...**Marla Slosberg**, 73-23 173rd. St., Flushing, NY 11366. Marla is the daughter of Charlie Cantor...**Bill Lindemann**, 50 Dawson St., Huntington Station, NY 11746...**Arthur Barlas**, 360 Littleton Rd. #B-18, Chelmsford, MA 01824...**Mike Cervone**, Museum of Broadcast Communications, 78 E. Washington, Chicago, IL 60602

**OLD FRIENDS:** **Thom Salome**, 492 4th St., Brooklyn, NY 11215 wants to trade with anyone. He has 4000 reels. Thom is looking for all recently released (last 3 years) material... **Reg Farrar**, 132 Gifford Ave., Jersey City, NJ 07304 is looking for Death Valley Days, Seth Parker Series and an episode in some show entitled "The Monkey's Fist."...**John Barber**, Box 70711, New Orleans, LA 70172 mentions that WRBH in the New Orleans area is running out of money. It is a




public service institution and broadcasts to the blind and print handicapped. Donations can be sent to WRBH-FM, 5926 S. Front St., New Orleans, LA 70115...**Lee Munsick**, 20 Harriet Dr., Whippany, NJ 07981 is looking for a complete audio copy of the induction ceremony broadcast from the Chicago Museum. It was heard on WABC in New York.

**IN FOND MEMORY:** We lost one of our favorites, **Florence Williams** on March 30; I have seen no notice of this in any publication. Florence was at our convention many times and always participated...**John Cameron Swayze**, Aug 15, 89; veteran newscaster...**Benay Venuta**, Sep 1, 84; Singer, actress, radio personality (Abbott and Costello Show, Harry Savoy, Duffy's Tavern)...**Jack Rose**, Oct 20, 87; Radio and Movie comedy writer, producer (Bob Hope, Jack Carson)...**Merrill (Murray) Bolan**, Oct 21, 90; radio show producer (Amos 'n' Andy, Jack Benny)...**Louise Lorimer**, Aug 12, 97; actress on Broadway, film and radio (soap operas and one Lux)...**Tom Helmore**, Sep 12, 91; Broadway, film and radio actor (Secret File, USA in 1953 on Mutual). I would like information on this program...**Maxene Andrews**, Oct 21, 79; with Patty and Laverne, on radio from 1939 (with Glenn Miller) and then had their own show until 1946...Rosa Rio tells me of the death of **Ralph Blane**, Nov 13 at the age of 81. He was a composer, often with Hugh Martin, of such songs as "Have Yourself a Merry, Merry Christmas," and "The Trolley Song"...**John Patrick**, Nov 7, 90; playwright and screenwriter; began career writing for NBC radio in San Francisco in the 1930's churning out about 1100 radio plays.

Write if you get work; and hang by your thumbs

JAY HICKERSON, Box 4321, Hamden, CT 06514  
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## CONVENTION HIGHLIGHTS

1995

The Friends of Old-time Radio held its 20th Annual Convention from October 19th – 21st, 1995 at the Holiday Inn – North, Newark, New Jersey. Celebrities present who received awards were: **Eugene Clark, Ivan Cury, Martha Greenhouse, Ed Jordan, Mary Jane Mastapeter, Paul Masterson, Gale Storm, Gil Stratton, Jr., Dick van Patten.** Other celebrities present were **Arthur Anderson, George Ansbro, Barney Beck, Lon Clark, Bob Dryden, Win Elliot, Ray Erlenborn, Harry Fleetwood, Fred Foy, Earl George, Bob Hastings, Florence James, Raymond Edward Johnson, Ruth Last, Abby Lewis, Bill Murtough, Bill Owen, Clive Rice, Rosemary Rice, Adele Ronson, Terry Ross, Arthur Tracy, Whit Vernon, Frances von Bernhardt, Betty Wragge.** The guests socialized with fans, participated in panels and workshops and re-created 8 radio shows.

The convention began Wednesday evening with complimentary wine and cheese for the overnight guests. About 75 people attended. On Thursday, many dealers opened at 9 am. There were 4 afternoon workshops: **Dave Zwengler** presented a quiz show; **Bob Madison** talked about Radio programs to the Screen; **Jack French** talked about TV programs to radio and **Bob Burnham** gave a presentation on OTR, the Computer and the Internet. Then we had cocktails and dinner. Seventy-nine fans attended during the day. One hundred sixty fans and guests attended in the evening. The highlights of the evening were: A Tribute to Boris Karloff and Bela Lugosi given by **Sara Karloff and Bela Lugosi** and a re-creation of "Whistler," winner of last year's script contest written by **Michael Giorgio.** The winner of the second radio play was announced. The winner was James Nixon. The play will be presented next year.

Friday began at 9:00 with the opening of the dealers room. Sixty dealer tables were active during the convention. Two hundred fifty-four people attended dinner with another 126 in the afternoon. Workshops and panels included the following: **Jack French** presented WOR: Mutual Memories with several guests; **Gary Yoggy, Joel Senter, Mitchell Weisberg and Dave Warren** talked about Amos 'n' Andy, pro and con; **Meridy Erlenborn** with several celebrity wives discussed life with their husbands; **Steve Lewis** directed the Gotham Radio Players in the Lights Out episode, "One Day It Rained Blood;" **Larry and John Gassman** gave a tribute to Phil Harris and Alice Faye; **David Bakish** talked about Jimmy Durante on radio; and **Gary Yoggy** presented World War II, the victory as told on radio. The afternoon ended with an author's panel with **David Bakish, Gary Yoggy, Gregory Koseluk, Brian Gari, Art Pierce and Richard Hayes.** After dinner "Arsenic and Old Lace" was re-created with **Dick van Patten and Gale Storm.** Anthony Tollin was the director. Then a 75-minute Radio Review Revue with many guests ended the proceedings. It was written, produced and directed by Dave Zwengler, Michael Giorgio and Arthur Anderson.

Saturday the panels and workshops included the following: **Adele Ronson and Lon Clark with Gil Mack** read Buck Rogers and Chick Carter in a panel about Pulp to Radio hosted by Anthony Tollin; a sports panel with **Gil Stratton, Jr. and Win Elliot** hosted by Jeff Muller; The **Dave Warren Players** re-created Baby Snooks and Mr. Keen; **Raymond Edward Johnson** gave his annual reading and talked about Inner Sanctum; **Bill Owen, George Ansbro, Fred Foy and Ed Jordan** presented an author's panel; the afternoon ended with a re-creation of "Nightbeat." directed by Don Ramlow.

Saturday's events culminated with cocktails and buffet dinner for 321 people with another 155 coming for the day. After dinner **Peg Lynch and Bob Dryden** re-created Ethel and Albert; then **Rosemary Rice and Dick van Patten** reminisced about I Remember Mama; The convention ended with a re-creation of My Little Margie with **Gale Storm, Dick van Patten and Gil Stratton, Jr.** Gary Yoggy directed it.

Besides the awards mentioned earlier, three Allen Rockford Awards were presented to **Joe Webb, Art Schreiber and Bobb Lynes** for their outstanding efforts in keeping radio alive. Special awards were given to **Earl George and Bob Hastings.** Both have attended our convention for several years and have always been willing to help. Donations were given to the Veteran's Bedside Network, The Stephanie Joyce Kahn Foundation, The Episcopal Actors Guild and Heller Memorial Foundation of AFTRA.

I again want to thank all the guests who were very gracious in granting interviews and giving of their time to be with us.





## NOTHING'S NEW in San Bruno, California ! (and now we're open!)



After several years of planning and preparation, my wife and I have opened a vintage media store in a local shopping center. It's a bit unusual because we don't just rent and sell "classic" movies on videotape but we also have:

- old radio shows and old television shows from 1950's and earlier
- old and new books by and about vintage entertainment (for browsing in the store, for rent, and for sale)
- stamps and FDCs with a theme pertaining to vintage media
- old movie/radio/tv magazines (including Radio Guide)
- old comic books with subjects based on characters in movies/radio/TV
- vintage advertising reproductions on metal (tin/steel & enamel)
- posters and lobby cards as well as arcade cards and other paper items
- jewelry and other media-theme knick-knacks as well as clothing items
- reproductions of old radios (by Thomas) and some originals too
- LP records and CDs with old radio shows and related material
- a small but growing organization: *Bayhill Vintage Media Study Group*
- rentals of TV/VCR combinations and compact stereos with record players
- conversion service of videos from PAL/SECAM to NTSC and vice versa
- custom dubbing and label making for video/audio collections
- graphics service with flatbed scanner and color inkjet printer (using Mac)

The movies on videotape we provide for rental include a variety of foreign films, usual studio releases, unusual films not commonly seen (and never found in chain video giants like Blockbuster), and many silents. Send \$1 for sample list

At present we rent and sell only locally (\$1.50 for 3 days for most items) but by April, 1996 we intend to offer rental/sales by mail. We also have a combination package which appeals to many customers. This is "5-6-7". Any 5 items (mix & match among what we can rent out) for \$6 for up to 7 days. And, of course, we encourage people to take a look at some of the interesting radio shows, television programs, and movies which they might otherwise skip over.

A person does not have to be a member to browse and buy but any rentals require purchasing a one-time membership card for \$5 (\$1 of this goes to the UCLA Film Restoration Archive). The membership card also gives the member access to many discounts, special purchases, and regularly issued catalogs of what we have for rental. The artist for our membership card logo is Gene Larson of NARA fame. A sample photocopy of the card appears below. It's light blue with navy blue logo and the thickness of a regular credit card. You can obtain one by sending us \$5 and you will receive all future mailings we provide. Only if borrowing privileges are abused do you lose your member's privileges. Then a short probationary period occurs before you may apply for another card (but at a higher cost).

We are interested in purchasing/leasing/borrowing any suitable material or items you might have along these lines. We also will accept consignments. Please see our business card reproduction on the right next to the copy of the membership card.

And with that, Lourdes and Roger Hill say "Hearty Congratulations to Friends of Old Time Radio on their 20th Anniversary Convention and a very big "Thank You" to Jay Hickerson and all those who put this convention together. If you are in the San Bruno area (just south of San Francisco at I-280 and San Bruno Avenue), come and sit a spell.

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# A Few Incidents From Radio Days Past

.....

by Charles Michelson

## Michelson: Act I

Some people call it "trivia," well it was not trivial during the great depression days of 1937 in New York City when a young high school graduate, Charles Michelson, sought a job. He set out on a particular morning like so many others seeking but not finding work. Late in the afternoon he stopped by his father's export office for a brief rest and put his feet up on a desk to at least feel what it might be like ... to have a job.

Michelson Sr. handed his son a cablegram that had just arrived from Australia advising that a Radio station in that far-off land heard about such a thing as an "electrical transcription" and would the company please find out what it was. Michelson Sr.'s firm exported phonograph records among other items to Australia, and the Radio stations there, even as now, played them over the air.

The next morning son Charles wended his way downtown to the studios of RCA Victor and after the usual delays was ushered into the office of Frank Walker, manager of the organization. Minutes later Charles was handed a super large 16" phonograph record, the label reading Program #1 Part 1 and titled "Omar, The Wizard of Persia," start inside, play at 33 1/3 rpm, along with another similar size record reading Program #1 Part 2.

The size of the record, which was also breakable, caused our young hero to question the eminent Mr. Frank Walker as to who could play such a monster thing — surely no phonograph turntable that he had ever seen or knew of could accommodate this rarity, whereupon Walker shot

back, "Son, ship this record to them, they'll know how to handle it and what's more tell them they will have to purchase 52 such discs to make up the series!"

Dutifully, but with considerable trepidation, Charles carried the delicate package back to the export office. Once there, everyone gazed with surprise at the oversized records, notwithstanding the special wooden box that was ordered to ship them in. The discs were carefully packed and shipped on the next steamer to Australia. There was no air service at the time across the Pacific.

## Michelson: Act II

Two months later, same scene, same feet upon the desk ... Charles was handed another cablegram reading "Ship 52 Omar Wizard Of Persia, Send Samples Others." Of course people are sometimes given to forget things that occurred 60 days previously, so after a few minutes of head scratching it all came back clear as a day in May. Australia had bought the Radio transcription program series. Quick as a deer, Charles rushed back to Mr. Walker's office, gave him the order and left this time with samples of "The Three Musketeers" and "Chandu, The Magician." The same procedure ensued, the specially ordered box, the steamer shipment, etc. As if by clockwork, in due time the cablegram came in ordering the latest two series with the same request to please keep shipping more.

By now, instead of looking for a job, Charles Michelson decided to go into business for himself, the business of selling electrical transcriptions in the United States. After all, if he could do it in

Australia, it should be even easier here.

He cleared out his dwindling bank account, took a loan from his father, and took off by train to Hollywood where he had learned most of these transcription programs originated. While there he signed up eastern and export sales representations for most of the major companies in the business and upon returning to New York, opened his own office on January 1, 1938, and his company, Charles Michelson Inc., survives to this day.

## The Shadow

"The Shadow" was only sponsored on some 20 stations along the Eastern Seaboard on the Mutual Network, so Michelson made a deal with the owners of the property, Street & Smith Publications, to handle sales of the show in all other markets. As a result, he sold both regional and local clients as well as individual accounts whose stations carried the Network, transcriptions of the series.

"The Shadow" was broadcast live from the Empire Theatre in New York before an audience of approximately 1500 every Sunday from 5 p.m.-5:30 p.m. In order to co-ordinate commercials for the Midwest, West Coast, and East Coast, two phone booths were placed at opposite ends of the stage with announcers inside. When the Eastern announcer delivered his commercials from mid-stage, the others delivered theirs and all three ended at the same time (we hoped), thus enabling the live show to be heard coast to coast with the appropriate commercials. In the East, the sponsor was D.L.&W. Coal Company (Blue Coal),

45 ►



the Midwest was sponsored by Carey Salt Company and the West Coast, by Grove's Four Way Cold Tablets.

One day, James Monks, a regular cast member, was doing a show at another network in New York City and the plan was to have a taxi waiting for him outside the studio so he could quickly get



Lon Clark aka "Nick Carter"

to WOR to be in "The Shadow." Arriving at the very last minute, he picked up the script and started to emote ... but all pandemonium broke loose as Monks read from the wrong page

about a murder that took place, yet the beheaded guy was still walking around not knowing in which direction to go to have his head screwed back on!

Then there was the time when they were running repeats of "Nick Carter" and the studio engineer, unthinkingly, placed part two of the recorded program on the air before part one ... They didn't live that one down for quite a while.

## Mary Sothern

One of the early soap opera series was "The Life of Mary Sothern." There were 324 episodes in the series. Sponsored in Washington, D.C., by the Wilkins Coffee Company on local station WUST, the series was very popular. Then came the day when a new staff member unwittingly mixed up the numerical sequence of the programs, playing later ones first and earlier episodes later. That quarter, Wilkins sold more coffee in Washington, D.C., than at any time during the entire year!

## Smilin' Ed

Then there was dear old Smilin' Ed McConnell. His daily series was titled "Hymn Time with Smilin' Ed," with Elowese at the organ. His hymn singing and homey poetry touched the hearts of millions especially throughout the South

and the Bible Belt area. One day Ed needed cash in a hurry. I was home sick in bed, in fact almost under sedation. Ed offered me the rights to all the recorded episodes for \$1000. Sick as I was, I knew a good deal and that's how I bought that series. Ed would get plastered quite regularly and one day when his live show had been sold to a new sponsor for a hefty increase, he was in his cups to the extent that he rendered a beautiful ad lib commercial ... unfortunately for the old sponsor. The network brass naturally tore their hair apart behind the soundproof studio window. Immediately after the show they fired Ed with the admonition to "never darken their doorstep again." It was at the end of the program however that Ed realized his error so in his effort to straighten things out, he mentioned that the new client was such a good guy that he wouldn't mind old Ed saying a few nice words about the former client. The very next day, the station received bags of mail full of letters and cards of accolades for the new advertiser that the network executives literally came back on bended knee asking Smilin' Ed to not only resume the show but to increase it from once weekly to five times weekly!

## Where's the Drama?

People have asked why they don't produce Radio dramas today as they did in the past. The reasons are: 1) The art of such writing went with those writers who emigrated to television; 2) Nobody is willing to pay those early writers the amounts of money they receive from TV; 3) Radio script writing is not being taught in the schools, at least not Radio drama; 4) The use of sound effects on Radio is practically a lost art; and 5) The directors are not there to direct the actors in this technique. There have been some attempts, but without the five above basics little hope for their commercial success is left.

## What's a Boy To Do

It was in the late 1940s one Sunday afternoon when a boy about 14 years of age appeared at the WOR Radio station studio in New York where we were rehearsing that day's "Nick Carter" show. In those days, security was not what it

should have been. I asked the boy what he was doing there and he responded that his father ran a Radio repair store in Queens and had built a recording machine and playback unit in their cellar. He and his friends would like to get a few of the used Radio scripts to act out at home. They already had purchased a couple of sound effect records, so could I help him. Having lived in Queens myself at the time, I knew of the store. Rather than dismissing him peremptorily, I said, "Fred (that was his name) I'll make you a deal. I'll give you money to go to the nearest store Sunday and bring back enough coffee and Danish pastry for the cast and crew to consume during the rehearsal break before they go to air. After the broadcast, your job is to clear up the cups and saucers etc. and place all the refuse in the basket, leaving the studio as clean as when we first came in. Then, you may have the used scripts. The deal was set. He was to come around each Sunday, do the chores and after the show, have the scripts. This continued until the series went off the air for the summer hiatus.

A few weeks later, walking on 63rd Drive, the main street in the Queens area, I passed Fred one day and he told me he had been accepted at Syracuse University in upstate New York, and he was going to study broadcasting. I felt good about that, sort of complimented ... perhaps I had in some small way helped set this young lad in the right direction. Time passed, in fact it was four years later, when I met this now young man on the street as casually as before, said hello and was about to move on when he told me he was graduating from Syracuse and that his term thesis, titled "What Was Wrong With The American Broadcasting Company's Programming," was read by Dr. Frank Stanton of CBS and as a result he was given a job at CBS in Pittsburgh. Again on the street at Christmastime, he waved to me, and called out that he was being moved to CBS in Chicago. Some months later, while reading the trade press, I saw that he was moved this time to New York! Oh yes, I forgot to tell you his full name; it was Fred Silverman! ▼

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